

FBK joins AIR in quest for better air quality

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AIR (Allow Independent Road-testing), the independent alliance set up to improve air quality by promoting independent, on-road vehicle emissions testing, has welcomed the Fondazione Bruno Kessler (FBK) as its founding member

The backing of FBK, following AIR's official launch in September 2017, is a significant step in AIR's efforts to facilitate the voluntary adoption of independent, on-road emissions testing by city regulators and automakers.

FBK is a non-profit public interest research entity, which is more than half a century old. Its aim of excellence in science and technology is achieved through two scientific hubs, seven research centres, seven laboratories and more than 400 researchers. FBK and its emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches is described as "Future Built on Knowledge", which aligns with AIR's central principle of using independent on-road emissions data to make informed policy and manufacturing decisions for cleaner air.

City regulators, vehicle manufacturers, on-road emissions testers and any other organisations that are aligned with AIR's mission are able to join the alliance to support its mission and realise membership benefits.

For cities, benefits include access to AIR's growing on-road emissions results database for over 1,500 different cars and light commercial vehicles on the road and on sale in Europe today. City regulators can fairly evaluate the on-road emissions of vehicles entering their cities and their own vehicle fleet. Cities can immediately adapt policy to improve urban air quality and inform their future vehicle fleet purchasing decisions. By using independent, comparable vehicle emissions results, AIR enables cities to implement policy that will not impede the free movement of goods within the EU.

Testing performed since 2011 by Emissions Analytics (EA) and published freely as the EQUA Index shows that a number of the latest Euro 6 cars still emit more NOx on the road than many Euro 3, Euro 4 and Euro 5 cars.

AIR, which operates entirely independently of the automotive industry, is able to support the use of ‘open-source’ independent on-road emissions testing. AIR already has licensed access to more than 10 million data points; emissions results and ratings for vehicles on the road and on sale in Europe today. Consumers, regulators and automakers already recognise that AIR’s test results provide a fair and comparative evaluation of each vehicle’s on-the-road NOx; CO2; particulate matter (including Particulate Number (PN)) emissions; major contributors to poor air quality. By providing information on fuel economy and CO2 emissions, regulators are still able to focus on climate change reduction policy.

Massimo Fedeli, Operations Director of AIR, said: “With confusion about air quality policy at an all-time high across Europe, and with many cities needing to act quickly, there is a stark need for an independent, informed voice. The official membership of FBK ensures the independence of AIR and continuity of the knowledgeable and impartial role it is playing in the air quality debate today.

“FBK membership allows AIR to remain entirely independent and progress our mission to improve air quality through the voluntary uptake of on-road emissions testing. AIR is working to accredit testing houses worldwide to ensure a wide range of local testing can be carried out.”

Andrea Simoni, Secretary General at Fondazione Bruno Kessler, said: “We have enthusiastically joined the AIR initiative. FBK has developed many technologies that are very useful to help the alliance implement its strategy; basic technologies including big data analysis, deep learning and sensoristics – the development of an intelligent ecosystem of sensors. Our aim is to support the AIR initiative in a scientific way, helping automakers and city regulators to use accurate, independent data to improve air quality.”

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